

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MORES

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mores of the North and the South, produced by the presence or absence of slavery. The passionate dislike and contempt of the people of one section for those of the other was due to the conception each had formed of the other's character and ways. Since the abolition of slavery the mores of the two sections have become similar and the sectional dislike has disappeared. The contrast between the mores of English America and Spanish America is very great. It would long outlast any political combination of parts of the two, if such should be brought about.

115. Missions and mores. The contrasts and antagonisms of the mores of different groups are the stumbling-blocks in the way of all missionary enterprise, and they explain many of the phenomena which missions present. We think that our "ways" are the best, and that their superiority is so obvious that all heathen, Mohammedans, Buddhists, etc., will, as soon as they learn what our ways are, eagerly embrace them. Nothing could be further from the truth. "It is difficult to an untraveled Englishman, who has not had an opportunity of throwing himself into the spirit of the East, to credit the disgust and detestation that numerous everyday acts, which appear perfectly harmless to his countrymen, excite in many Orientals."¹ If our women are shocked at polygamy and the harem, Mohammedan women are equally shocked at the ball and dinner dresses of our ladies, at our dances, and at the manners of social intercourse between the sexes. Negroes in East Africa are as much disgusted to see white men eat fowl or eggs as we are at any of their messes. Missions always offer something from above

downwards. They
contain an assumption of superiority and
beneficence. Half-
civilized people never admit the assumption. They
meet it just
as we would meet a mission of Mohammedans or
Buddhists to
us. Savages and barbarians dismiss "white man's
ways" with
indifference. The virtues and arts of civilization are
almost as
disastrous to the uncivilized as its vices. It is really
the great
tragedy of civilization that the contact of lower and
higher is
disastrous to the former, no matter what may be
the point of
contact, or how little the civilized may desire to do
harm.

¹ Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, 216.